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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 02 HARARE 000321

SIPDIS

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DRL FOR N. WILETT
ADDIS ABABA FOR USAU
ADDIS ABABA FOR ACSS
NSC FOR SENIOR AFRICA DIRECTOR MICHELLE GAVIN
STATE PASS TO USAID FOR J. HARMON AND L. DOBBINS

E.O. 12958: DECL: 04/17/2019

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SUBJECT: AMBASSADOR MEETS WITH ZIM ICT MINISTER NELSON
CHAMISA

REF: HARARE 303

Classified By: Ambassador James D. McGee for reason 1.4(b) and (d).

11. (C) SUMMARY. Ambassador McGee met with Zimbabwean Minister for Information and Communications Technology (ICT) Nelson Chamisa on April 8 as part of a series of calls on ministers in the new government. They discussed the US\$100,000 recently paid by the USG to ZimPost for past delivery of personal mail and the U.S. request to begin Diplomatic Post Office (DPO) service to the Embassy. Chamisa pleaded for support to provide basic computing technology to all ministers to enable better cooperation within Cabinet. The meeting also gave a glimpse into the dynamics of the new unity government when Chamisa's secretary and Acting PermSec were overheard worrying that Chamisa had canceled a notetaker from the MFA.
END SUMMARY.

12. (SBU) Ambassador McGee began by explaining his efforts to meet with ministers in the new government. He presented Chamisa with copies of the MOU to establish DPO service, explaining that the process had begun with the old government. He noted that we did not need GOZ approval, but wanted to work with them as partners on this issue. Chamisa promised to review the MOU and said he did not see any reason why it should be a problem. He then asked about the US\$100,000 owed to ZimPost for past delivery of personal mail originating in the U.S. The Ambassador explained that this amount had been paid.

13. (SBU) Chamisa proceeded to reiterate his vision for the ministry, saying that he wanted to introduce internet technology to the entire country, but first had to introduce and explain what ICT could do for Zimbabweans. He said that his PowerPoint presentation at the recent Victoria Falls retreat had impressed many other ministers who weren't familiar with the technology. His iPod was even more shocking to some of them. Chamisa said that he wanted to push e-awareness programs for MPs, councilors, and in the school system.

¶4. (SBU) Chamisa asked for technical assistance for his ministry, especially to procure basic computer technology for all senior government officials. He said that currently announcements about Cabinet meetings were broadcast on ZBC radio and television because not all ministers could get e-mail. The Ambassador suggested that all requests for assistance should be channeled through Finance Minister Biti; we would consider any such request.

¶5. (C) Before the meeting began, APAO, who accompanied the Ambassador, overheard Chamisa's secretary and Kosmas Chigwambwa, the acting PermSec, worrying that no one from the MFA was there to observe the meeting per "government procedure." They said that Chamisa had said this was "his meeting" and so MFA was not needed. After speaking with Chamisa about the issue, Chigwambwa told the secretary that Chamisa had promised to talk with Mumbengegwi if there were any issues.
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¶6. (C) COMMENT. We expect that Chamisa will quickly sign off on the DPO agreement. We fully agree that government offices need to be equipped with computer technology and will discuss this issue with USAID. END COMMENT.

¶7. (C) UPDATE NOTE: Since the April 8 meeting, The Herald announced that Chamisa had been stripped of postal and telecommunications portfolios which were transferred to the Ministry of Transportation and Infrastructure headed by ZANU-PF's Nicholas Goche. The ramifications of this transfer

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are unknown, see reftel for further details.

MCGEE